

Message Text

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TAGS:EAGR, MX, WFC

SUBJECT: WORLD FOOD COUNCIL

FOR JOHN FERCH FROM QUENTIN WEST

1. FOLLOWING IS WORKING DRAFT OF SECRETARY BERGLAND'S MINISTERIAL STATEMENT. SINCE NATURE OF THIS STATEMENT WILL BE SIGNIFICANTLY AFFECTED BY ONGOING DEVELOPMENTS IN MEXICO, WE ANTICIPATE THAT MUCH OF THE FINAL DRAFTING WILL BE DONE IN MEXICO AFTER DALE HATHAWAY ARRIVES.

2. BEGIN QUOTE: I WELCOME THIS OPPORTUNITY TO SAY A FEW WORDS ONCE AGAIN TO THIS FOURTH MINISTERIAL SESSION OF THE WORLD FOOD COUNCIL. I HAVE FOLLOWED THE ACTIVITIES OF THE COUNCIL SINCE ITS BEGINNING -- AND WITH SPECIAL INTEREST SINCE ATTENDING THE THIRD SESSION IN MANILA LAST YEAR.

EARLIER IN THIS SESSION, I REVIEWED OUR HOPES AND EXPECTATIONS FOR THE WORK TO BE DONE HERE AND I EXPRESSED UNCLASSIFIED

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GENERAL SUPPORT FOR THE PROPOSALS SET BEFORE US IN THE SFC SECRETARIAT. I SPEAK AGAIN--THIS TIME TO PRESENT OUR VIEW OF THE LONGER-TERM GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF THIS COUNCIL.

FIRST, THE UNITED STATES WOULD LIKE TO REAFFIRM ITS CONVICTION THAT THE WORLD FOOD COUNCIL SERVES A VERY USEFUL

PURPOSE IN BRINGING TOGETHER REPRESENTATIVES AT THE MINISTERIAL LEVEL FOR A FRANK EXCHANGE OF VIEWS AND POLICIES CONCERNING THE WORLD FOOD SITUATION.

MY COUNTRY REGARDS THE WORLD FOOD COUNCIL AS THE HIGHEST UNITED NATIONS BODY SPECIFICALLY CONCERNED WITH WORLD FOOD PROBLEMS AND THE MEANS OF OVERCOMING THEM. OUR VIEW IS THAT THE WORLD FOOD COUNCIL HAS RESPONSIBILITY FOR OVERSEEING AND HELPING COORDINATE PROGRAMS AND PRIORITIES WITHIN THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM.

WE FEEL THAT AN IMPORTANT ROLE OF THE WORLD FOOD COUNCIL IS TO HELP SUSTAIN NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL CONCERN WITH RESPECT TO HUNGER AND MALNUTRITION. THIS IS NEEDED TO MAINTAIN A HIGH PRIORITY FOR THESE PROBLEMS ON THE INTERNATIONAL AGENDA. WITHOUT CONTINUED VIGOROUS ACTION BY THIS BODY -- SMALL AS IT IS -- THE RESULT WOULD BE COMPLACENCY AMONG MANY OF THE NATIONS AND INTERNATIONAL BODIES THAT SHOULD BE MOST CONCERNED.

THE UNITED STATES FEELS THAT THE ROLE OF THE WORLD FOOD COUNCIL REQUIRES IT TO MONITOR, ON A CONTINUING BASIS, THE WORLD FOOD SITUATION, AND PARTICULARLY CONDITIONS IN FOOD PRIORITY COUNTRIES. ALTHOUGH PER CAPITA FOOD CONSUMPTION HAS IMPROVED SOMEWHAT DURING THE PAST THREE YEARS, CONSUMPTION IN THE POORER COUNTRIES REMAINS INADEQUATE.
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MOREOVER, 1977 PRODUCED NEW CROP SHORTFALLS IN SOME OF THE SAME AFRICAN COUNTRIES THAT WERE IN SUCH DIFFICULTY IN 1974.

DEVELOPING COUNTRIES HAVE INCREASED THEIR DEPENDENCE ON IMPORTED FOODS, ESPECIALLY GRAINS. AND, DESPITE THESE EXPANDED IMPORTS, THERE APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN LITTLE IMPROVEMENT IN NUTRITION, ESPECIALLY IN THE LOWEST-INCOME COUNTRIES--THOSE WITH LESS THAN DOLS. 300 ANNUAL PER CAPITA INCOME. THE WORLD BANK HAS ESTIMATED THERE ARE OVER A BILLION PERSONS IN THE DEVELOPING WORLD TOO POOR TO HAVE AN ADEQUATE DIET. IN THE LONGER TERM, SAY BY 1990, THE PRODUCTION OF STAPLE FOOD CROPS WITHIN FOOD PRIORITY COUNTRIES--IF RECENT TRENDS CONTINUE UNCHECKED--COULD FALL FURTHER BELOW DIETARY NEEDS.

THE WORLD FOOD COUNCIL SHOULD MONITOR DEVELOPMENTS AND REPORT ON AN ANNUAL BASIS THE FLOW OF RESOURCES TO FOOD AND AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT. THIS SHOULD INCLUDE ALLOCATIONS OF DOMESTIC RESOURCES IN THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES, EXTERNAL AID TO POORER COUNTRIES, THAT ORIGINATING FROM TRADITIONAL AND NEW DONOR COUNTRIES, AND THE COMMITMENTS

MADE BY MULTILATERAL ORGANIZATIONS.

FOOD AID SHOULD BE INCLUDED; THE DEVELOPMENT VALUE OF THIS AID SHOULD BE AN IMPROTANT CONSIDERATION.

LOOKING TOWARD FUTURE MEETINGS OF THIS COUNCIL, THE UNITED STATES ENVISIONS THREE TOPICS THAT SHOULD RECEIVE MAJOR ATTENTION:

1. AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH. OUR DISCUSSIONS OF AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH AT THIS SESSION HAVE BEEN CARRIED ON WITHOUT BENEFIT OF THE IMPORTANT STUDY BEING COMPLETED BY THE CONSULTATIVE GROUP FOR INTERNATIONAL AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH. THEREFORE, A MORE SPECIFIC CONSIDERATION OF THIS TOPIC
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MIGHT BE A MAJOR ITEM ON THE AGENDA OF NEXT YEAR'S COUNCIL MEETING. THE COUNCIL MAY, AT THAT MEETING, WISH TO DISCUSS THE LINKAGES BETWEEN THE INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH CENTERS AND NATIONAL RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS.

2. FOOD-POPULATION BALANCE. THE WORLD FOOD CONFERENCE IN RESOLUTION 9 RECOGNIZED THAT THE INCREASING DEMAND FOR FOOD IS RELATED TO UNPRECENTED POPULATION GROWTH. STUDIES BY THE FAO AND THE WFC SHOW THAT THIS RELATIONSHIP IS PARTICULARLY SIGNIFICANT IN MANY DEVELOPING COUNTRIES. WHILE THIS COUNCIL IS AND SHOULD BE ONE CONCERNED WITH FOOD, I BELIEVE IT WOULD BE APPROPRIATE FOR THE COUNCIL AT SOME FUTURE MEETING TO EXAMINE THE CRITICAL FOOD-POPULATION BALANCE AND CONSIDER WHAT GOVERNMENTS ARE DOING TO MEET THE OBJECTIVES OF RESOLUTION 9.

3. FOOD PRESERVATION AND DISTRIBUTIONL I AM PLEASED TO NOTE THAT INCREASING ATTENTION IS BEING PAID TO THE REDUCTION OF POST-HARVEST FOOD LOSSES, WHICH HAVE CONCERNED MANY OF US FOR A LONG TIME. WE ENCOURAGE FAO AND BILATERAL DONORS TO CONTINUE THE WORK THEY HAVE STARTED IN THIS AREA. MORE ATTENTION STILL NEEDS TO BE GIVEN TO THE IMPROVEMENT OF STORAGE, WAREHOUSING, AND DISTRIBUTION OF GRAINS IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES. IT MAY BE TIMELY IN A FUTURE MEETING TO EVALUATE WHAT IS BEING DONE BY NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL AGENCIES TO DETERMINE WHAT MORE MIGHT BE CONE TO MAKE A REAL IMPACT ON THESE PROBLEMS OF STORAGE, WAREHOUSING AND GRAINS DISTRIBUTION.

EACH OF THESE AREAS IS WORTHY OF EXPANDED WFC ATTENTION. THE UNITED STATES WOULD SUPPORT A SECRETARIAT INITIATIVE TO STAFF OUT ANY ONE OF THESE SUGGESTIONS WITH A VIEW TO HAVING THEM ON THE AGENDA FOR OUR NEXT MINISTERIAL MEETING.
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THANK YOU, MR. CHAIRMAN, FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO SPEAK.

END QUOTE. VANCE

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